



Staff Communication

File #: PC Reso 06-2017, **Version:** 1

Agenda Date: May 8, 2017

Subject:

Resolution adopting design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District

Presented By: Dennis Swain, Senior Planner
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SUMMARY:

The proposal is to formally adopt design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District.

BACKGROUND:

Noted for its architectural significance and its contribution to the city's cultural heritage, the 17-house Louthan Heights Historic District, in the 5600 block of South Louthan Street, has a concentration of Arts and Crafts, or Craftsman-style, bungalows. Arts and Crafts/Craftsman elements - such as broad porches, clipped gable roofs with overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters - characterize the houses in the district. Thirteen of the seventeen houses have a distinctive pebbledash stucco exterior, with the stucco on each house having a pebble stone distinct from those used on the other 12 houses with a pebbledash stucco exterior.

The adoption of design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District will meet a critical, and long awaited, need for consistency, predictability, and creativity in design development and review. It will also provide background information and the specificity of direction needed to address conditions that are unique to the district. The neighborhood has asked for design guidelines since the formation of the district in 2002. The city's historic preservation public outreach program ("True Grit") recommended their development and they have been included on the Historical Preservation Board's (HPB's) subsequent annual work programs. In response to this need and desire, the city applied for and was awarded a State of Colorado Certified Local Government (CLG) grant to develop design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District.

The grant allowed the city to hire Melanie Short and Abigail Christman, both with Kore Architects, to develop the guidelines. Melanie and Abigail, both of whom have extensive backgrounds in historic preservation, worked with the neighborhood and with city staff to craft design guidelines unique to the district. The consultants met with the neighbors early, sent the neighbors the draft guidelines, asked for comments and corrections, and made changes per the neighbors' suggestions. The neighbors' comments have been included in subsequent drafts of the guidelines, including the draft attached to this staff communication.

In developing the guidelines, the consultants built upon other work done for the city with assistance from the Colorado State Historic Fund, including the 2000-2001 Historic Buildings Survey, which includes surveys for each of the houses in the district.

The format of the guidelines has been tailored to the needs and desires of the neighborhood, while remaining

compatible with the format of the city's other design standards and guidelines. The neighborhood asked for information beyond what is typically included in design guidelines and which is beyond the city's purview. That additional information, such as traditional paint colors, is provided as voluntary guidelines, and is identified as such in the introductory text for that section.

PROCESS:

Per city code, §4-6-6(E) of the City Code, the historical preservation board will make recommendations to the planning commission on design guidelines for historic districts and historic landmarks and, per §2-9-1(D), the Planning Commission may make and adopt such design guidelines it deems necessary to guide development within the city. Each body is charged with holding a public hearing on the guidelines, with the Historical Preservation Board making a recommendation to the Planning Commission, which has the authority to adopt them.

As an initial step in the review process, the draft guidelines were posted on the LittletonPlans.org website. The draft guidelines were then presented to the historical preservation board and the Louthan neighbors at the board's October 17, 2016 meeting. The board asked the neighbors to review the guidelines one more time, which they did.

The neighbors' comments, as well comments from the November 14, 2016 historical preservation board /planning commission joint study session were included in the draft considered by the board at a November 20, 2016 public hearing. After public comment and board discussion, the board voted to continue the public hearing to the January 18, 2017 board meeting so the staff could prepare and the board could review a draft copy that incorporated all of the changes agreed to by the board at the hearing.

The Community Development staff asked that the board continue the public hearing a second time, to the March 20, 2017 board meeting. The board approved staff's request for a second continuation.

At the end of the March 20, 2017 public hearing, the historical preservation board voted unanimously to support HPB Resolution 03-2016, recommending planning commission adopt the Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines, as amended by the board.

Following the March 20, 2017 hearing, the amendments approved by the board were incorporated into the design guidelines prior to their being posted on LittletonPlans.org and sent to planning commission.

If the planning commission approves PC Resolution 06-2017, adopting the Louthan Height Historic District Design Guidelines, then a final copy will be developed and distributed, including any additional changes included by the planning commission as part of the motion to adopt.

LOCATION:

The Louthan Heights Historic District is in Northeast Littleton, north of Littleton Boulevard and South of Powers Avenue, on both sides of the 5600 block of South Louthan Street.

- Raise the bar to increase the quality of community and economic development

Citywide Plan

Part I: Goals and Policies

Goal 4: A Distinctive Littleton

Maintain and expand upon the characteristics that make Littleton an authentic and distinctive community.

A Distinctive Littleton - Policies

- 4.1. Build upon the assets that are unique to Littleton, such as the Platte River and its adjoining natural areas and Littleton's history, schools, neighborhoods, cultural facilities, and public image.
- 4.2. Encourage preservation of historic structures, districts, and places that are significant to Littleton history.
- 4.3. Encourage high quality design, architecture, landscape architecture, and public art throughout Littleton.
- 4.4. Encourage “architecture of place” and small, independent businesses that differentiate Littleton from nearby municipalities.

Citywide Plan

Part II: Transformative Actions

Transformative Action 3: Direct Littleton’s Growth

- 3.1 Implement the Vision and Goals of this plan by reviewing all of the city's land-related regulations and programs for their ability to implement the plan, and revise the regulations and programs to that end.

Progress Park Neighborhood Plan

The development and adoption of design guidelines are also consistent with and help implement the goal and policies of the Progress Park Neighborhood Plan.

The Louthan Heights Historic District lies on the west end of the Progress Park Neighborhood, which is bounded on the south by Littleton Boulevard, on the west by the railroad depression, and on the north and east by the city limits. The following selected sections of the Progress Park Neighborhood Goals and Policies speak to the desire to preserve the existing character of the neighborhood.

Louthan Historic District (L) is in the Progress Park Neighborhood



Progress Park Neighborhood Plan Neighborhood Goals

Goal 1: Preserve the existing character of the neighborhood as much as possible, preserving especially the single-family home areas.

Progress Park Neighborhood Plan Neighborhood Policies

Land Use

Policy 1: The Progress Park residents desire to preserve the low-density residential character of their neighborhood.

Zoning

Zoning directs land uses and the details of how those land uses are configured on a site. Design guidelines have no impact on land uses; e.g., whether a property is used for a residential or commercial use. In order to preserve the character of historic structures and districts, design guidelines may include recommendations that are more conservative than would be allowed by the underlying zoning. For example, if the minimum open space requirement in the underlying zone district is 10% of the site, but the historic character of the district includes smaller houses on larger lots, then maintaining a higher percentage of open space might be an essential recommendation of the design guidelines.

Below is a table that, in the left two columns, shows the key provisions of the R-3 zoning district in which the Louthan Heights Historic District is located. In the right column, the table shows the relationship of the design guidelines to that zoning provision.

TITLE 10 Zoning Regulations		LOUTHAN HEIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT
§10-2-8 R-3 Single Family Residential District		
(A) ALLOWED LAND USES		
Permitted Uses	Single-Family Residential	NA – The guidelines do not address land use.
Accessory Uses	Max. Size: 120 sf Max Ht: 8 ft. Location: See the box below this table	On pages 52-54 the guidelines address compatibility of scale and the general location of garages and sheds. The guidelines may be slightly more restrictive with these two items than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.
Uses Allowed with PDO	2-3 Family Dwelling Townhouse	The guidelines do not address density. Because this is a historic district, houses cannot be scraped for new construction, but it might be possible to convert a single-family house to two units. On pages 55-57, the guidelines address expansions and additions and may be more restrictive than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.

(B) MINIMUM LOT REQUIREMENTS		
1. Lot Area	6,500 sf (0.15 acres)	NA – The guidelines do not address lot area
2. Lot Width at Front Setback	65 feet	NA – The guidelines do not address lot width
3. Unobstructed Open Space	50 percent	Although the guidelines do not directly address unobstructed open space, they do address compatibility of the scale and placement of structures. In some cases, the guidelines may be more restrictive than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.
4. Building Setbacks		Although the guidelines do not directly address building setbacks, they do address compatibility of the scale and placement of structures. In some cases, the guidelines may be more restrictive than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.
(a) Front Setback	20 feet	“
(b) Rear Setback	20 feet	“
(c) Side Setbacks		
North / West	5 feet	“
South / East	10 feet	“
Corner Lot Side Street Setback	10 feet	“
5. Maximum Height of Structure	30 feet	Although the guidelines do not directly address maximum height of structures, they do address compatibility of the scale and placement of structures. In some cases, the guidelines may be more restrictive than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.

(C) §10-44 ACCESSORY USES AND STRUCTURES	
(A) Accessory Uses Permitted:	NA – The guidelines do not address land use
(B) Limitations on Accessory Uses	NA – The guidelines do not address land use
(C) Minimum Setbacks for Accessory Structures	On pages 52-54, the guidelines address the compatibility of the general location of garages and other accessory structures. The guidelines might be slightly more restrictive with these two items than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.
(D) Maximum Size for Accessory Structures	On pages 52-54, the guidelines address the compatibility of the general location of garages and other accessory structures. The guidelines might be slightly more restrictive with these two items than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.
(E) Maximum Height for Accessory Structures	On pages 52-54, the guidelines address the compatibility of the general location of garages and other accessory structures. The guidelines might be slightly more restrictive with these two items than the zoning, although the intent is generally the same.

(D) HOME OCCUPATION STANDARDS	
(a) Home Occupations Permitted	NA – The guidelines do not address land use.
(b) Standards for Home Occupations	NA – The guidelines do not address land use. Nothing in the guidelines is different from the provisions in the zoning.

Below are the minimum setbacks for accessory structures in the R-3 zone district. The Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines address compatibility of the general location of garages and sheds, but do not provide specific distances. With these two items, the guidelines may be slightly more restrictive than the R-3 zoning, although the intent is generally the same. In no case, are the design guidelines less restrictive than the zoning.

Minimum Setbacks for Accessory Structures in the R-3 Zone Districts

Minimum setbacks for accessory structures in the A-1, R-S, R-L, R-E, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-3X, R-4, R-5 districts, and for residential structures only in the T and CA zone districts, are as follows:

1. Front Yard: No accessory structure shall be placed in the front yard of any lot.
2. Rear Yard: Except as provided in subsections (C)4 and (C)6 of this section:
 - (a) Adjacent to an alley: Ten feet (10'); or
 - (b) Not adjacent to an alley: 2.5 feet.
3. Side Yard: Except as provided in subsection (C)6 of this section:
 - (a) Along interior lot line: Five feet (5'); or
 - (b) Corner lot along street: 12.5 feet.
4. Garages: Garages must be set back from the street or alley so that a driveway length of twenty feet (20') can be achieved when there is a direct access into the garage

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines were developed by historic preservationists, Melanie Short and Abigail Christman, who are experts in the field. They worked with the city staff and the Louthan neighbors, who provided invaluable insight into the preservation issues they face and what they hope the design guidelines will help achieve. The guidelines were developed to reflect the unique conditions in the district, while also following the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation, and the city's other design guidelines. The design guidelines have been reviewed in public hearings and revised to incorporate changes agreed to by the historical preservation board at their public hearing.

Staff, therefore, recommends planning commission approval of PC Resolution 06-2017, adopting the Louthan Heights Historic District Design Guidelines.

PROPOSED MOTION:

The planning commission may take any of the following actions on the Resolution: approve; approve with conditions; continue to a date certain; or deny. A sample motion is provided for each option.

Motion to Approve and/if Necessary, with Conditions

I move to APPROVE PC Resolution 06-2017, concerning adoption of design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District, [with the following condition(s):]

Note: If conditions are necessary, include them here:

- 1.
- 2.

Motion to Continue to a Date Certain

I move to CONTINUE the public hearing on PC Resolution 06-2017, concerning adoption of design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District to _____ (insert date) in order to _____.

Motion to Deny

I move to DENY PC Resolution 06-2017, concerning adoption of design guidelines for the Louthan Heights Historic District. The foregoing denial is based on the findings that the design guidelines:

NOTE: Identify criterion or criteria not met and adjust motion accordingly: